

DRAWING AMENDMENTS

Please replace the current FIGS. 1 – 6C with FIGS. 1 – 5D in the attached drawing Replacement Sheets. In the Replacement Sheets, FIGS. 6A – 6C have been deleted and FIGS. 1 – 5D have been revised as shown in the attached Annotated Marked-up Drawing Sheets.

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 8, 18 – 25 and 28 are pending and rejected.

The applicants, attorney amends claims 1, 8, 18 and 19, and adds claims 31 – 43. Claims 1, 18 and 19 have been amended to address the examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a). Claim 8 has been amended not to overcome the examiner's rejection, but to more clearly recite an aspect of the applicants' invention. The applicant's attorney respectfully asserts that claims 1 – 8, 18 – 25 and 28, as amended, and added claims 31 – 43 are in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed below.

If, after considering this response, the examiner believes the claims should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that before issuing an Office Action, the examiner call Mr. John Janeway (425-455- 5575) to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims.

Objection to the Drawings

The applicants' attorney deletes FIGS. 6A – 6C and amends FIGS. 1 – 5D to overcome the examiner's objections. The attached Replacement Sheets contain FIGS. 1 – 5D, as amended, and the Annotated Marked-up Drawing Sheets show the amendments made to FIGS 1 – 5D.

No new matter has been added to the application with these amendments to FIGS. 1 – 5D.

Claims 1 – 8 and 31 – 37

The applicant's attorney respectfully asserts that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over Japanese Patents 52143691 (JP '691) and 06040379 (JP '379), and U.S. Patent 5,277,117 issued to Bender *et al.* (Bender) because each fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to function in at least two operational modes.

The applicants' claim 1, as amended, recites a vessel that includes a multi-mode hull operable to allow the vessel to function in at least two operational modes.

For example, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 5A – 5D and discussed in paragraphs 16 and 39 – 45 of the specification, a ship 100 includes a multi-mode hull 510 whose draft (551 in FIG. 5A, 552 in FIG. 5B, 553 in FIG. 5C, and 554 in FIG. 5D) can be changed to allow the ship 100 to operate in different operational modes. For example, the draft 551 of the ship 100 can be shallow as shown in FIG. 5A to allow the ship to operate in a logistics mode. In the logistics mode, the ship 100 can perform tasks in shallow water, such as delivering supplies and personnel to a recently established beachhead. The draft 554 of the ship can also be deep as shown in FIG. 5D to allow the ship to operate in a low freeboard mode. In the low freeboard mode, the ship 100 is difficult to detect and thus can perform missions requiring stealth.

In contrast, JP '691 fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to function in at least two operational modes. JP '691 discloses a ship 1 including a monohull, a bay 3, and a boat 2 that can enter and leave the bay 3 via a ramp 4 while the ship 1 is at sea. The hull shown for the ship 1 is a monohull. JP '691 does not show the ship operating in different operational modes. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed vessel 100, the ship 1 in JP '691 does not include a multi-mode hull.

JP '379 also fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to function in at least two operational modes. JP' 379 discloses a boat that includes a hull (15 in FIG. 2 and 1 in FIG. 6). Each hull has a right portion (the right side of the boat as shown in FIGS. 2 and 6) and a left portion (the left side of the boat as shown in FIGS. 2 and 6). The hulls shown for the ship 1 are the hulls shown in FIGS. 2 and 6. JP '379 shows the boat carrying different equipment but does not show the boat operating in different operational modes. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed vessel 100, the boat in JP '379 does not include a multi-mode hull.

Bender also fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to function in at least two operational modes. Bender discloses a control ship 36 (FIG. 4) that remotely controls an air cushion boat 10 (FIGS. 1 – 4). The boat 10 includes a blower 18 to blow air between the boat and the surface of the water, and a skirt 14 to trap the

air between the boat and the water's surface. Bender does not disclose other hulls for the boat 10. The hull of the control ship 36 is not discussed in Bender, but is shown in FIG. 4 as an air cushion hull similar to the hull of the boat 10. Bender does not show or discuss the control ship 36 or boat 10 operating in different operational modes. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed vessel 100, Bender's control ship 36 and boat 10 do not include a multi-mode hull.

Claims 2 – 8 and 31 – 37 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies on claim 1 as amended.

Claims 18 and 38 – 43

Claim 18 is patentable over JP '691, JP '379 and Bender for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over JP '691, JP '379 and Bender.

Claims 38 – 43 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies from claim 18.

Claims 19 – 25 and 28

Claim 19 is patentable over JP '691, JP '379 and Bender for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over JP '691, JP '379 and Bender.

Claims 20 – 25 and 28 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies from claim 19.

Conclusion

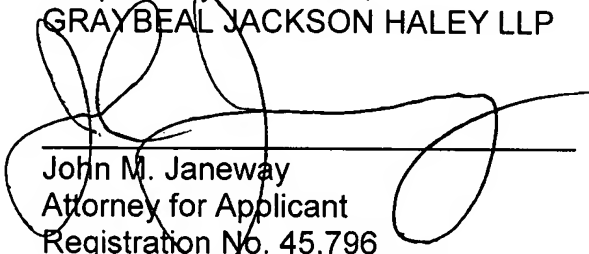
The applicants' attorney respectfully requests the examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1 – 8, 18 – 25 and 28, and issue an allowance for claims 1 – 8, 18 – 25, 28 and 31 – 43, as amended.

Should any additional fees be required, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

If, after considering this response, the examiner believes the claims should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that before issuing an Office Action, the examiner call Mr. John Janeway (425-455- 5575) to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims.

DATED this 23rd day of January 2006.

Respectfully submitted,
GRAYBEAL JACKSON HALEY LLP



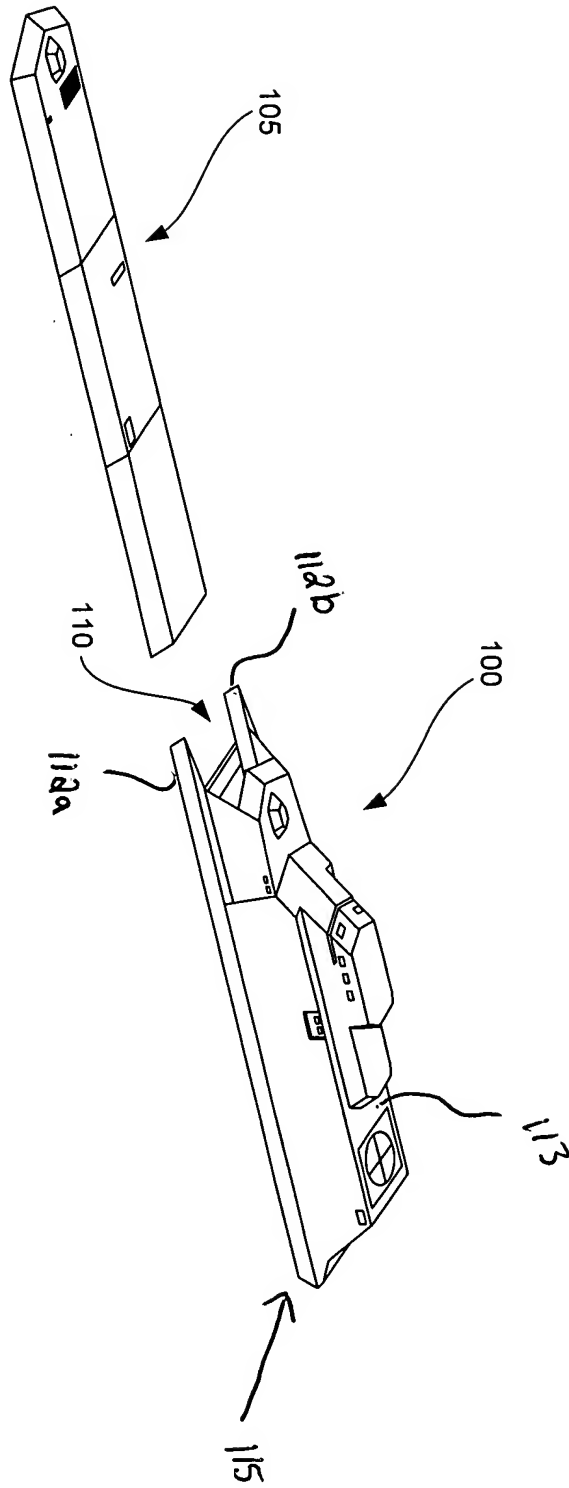
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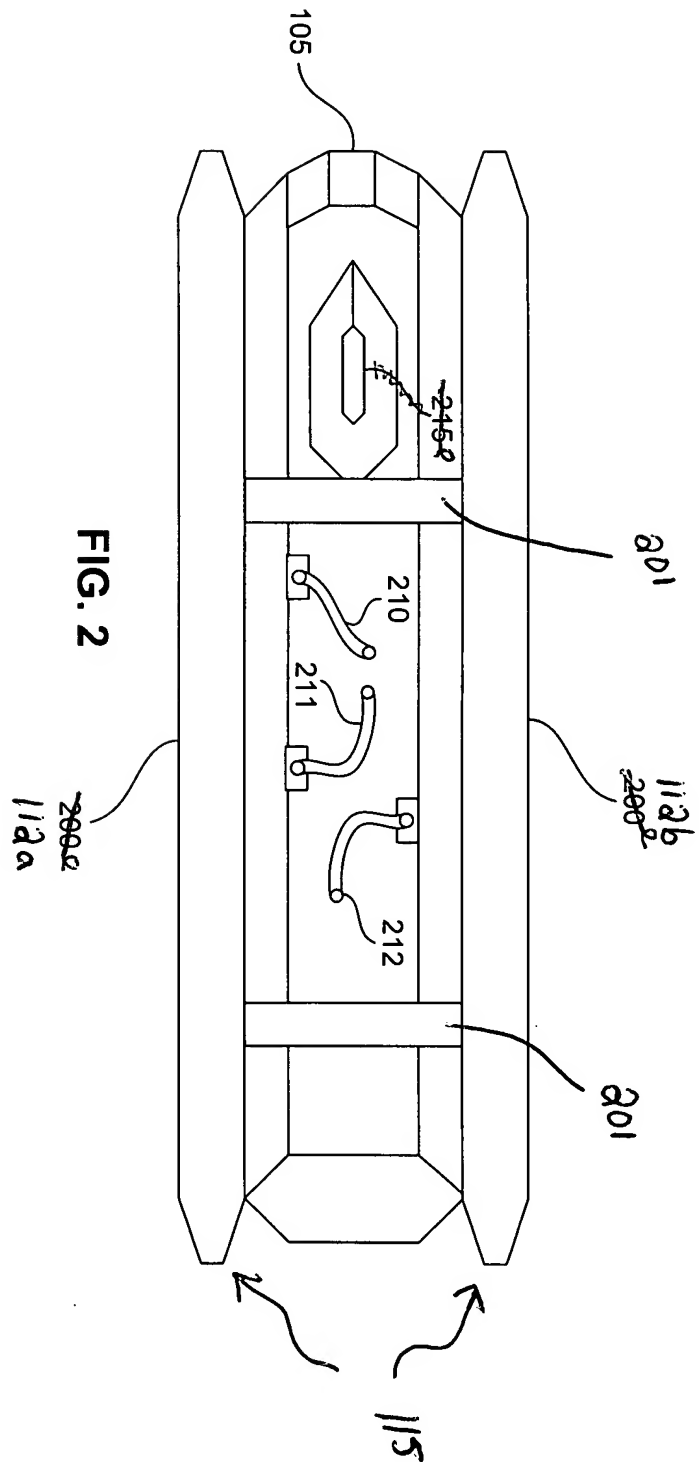
Enclosures: Annotated Marked Up Drawings

Replacement Sheets



FIG. 1





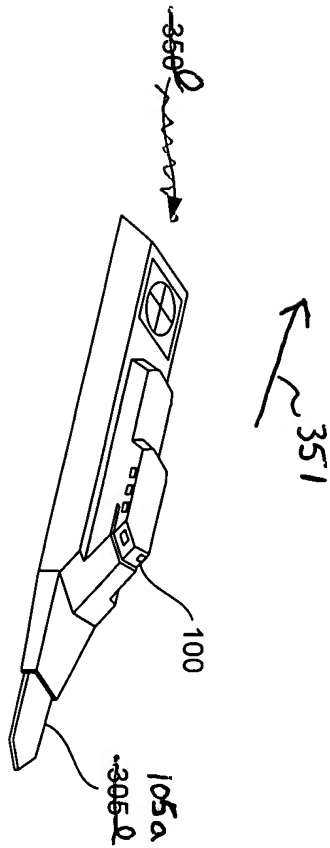


FIG. 3A

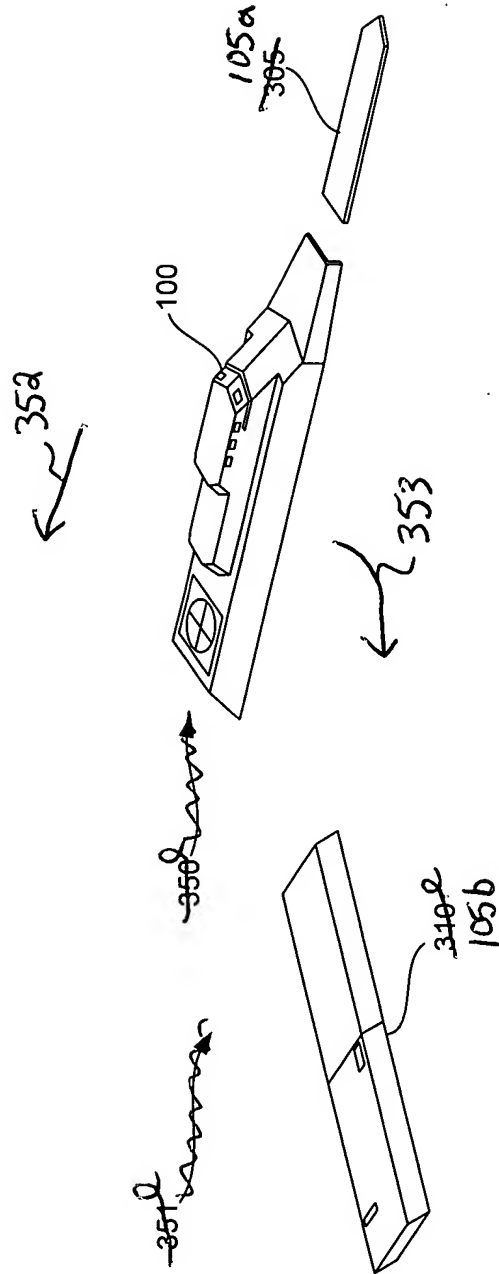


FIG. 3B

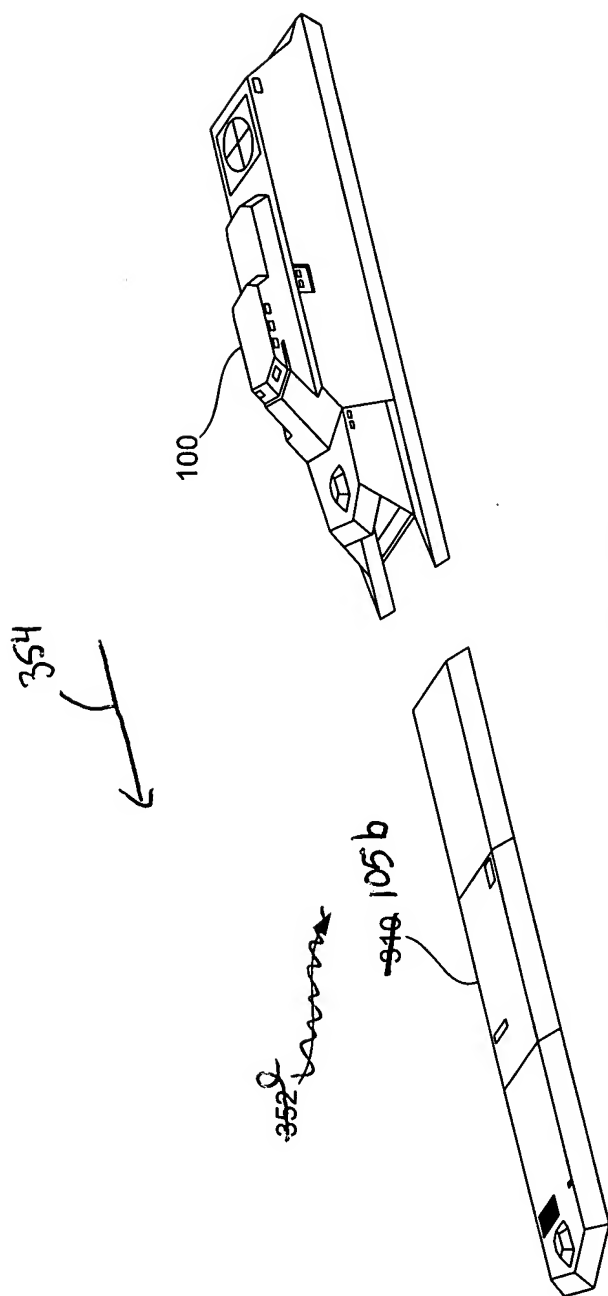


FIG. 3C

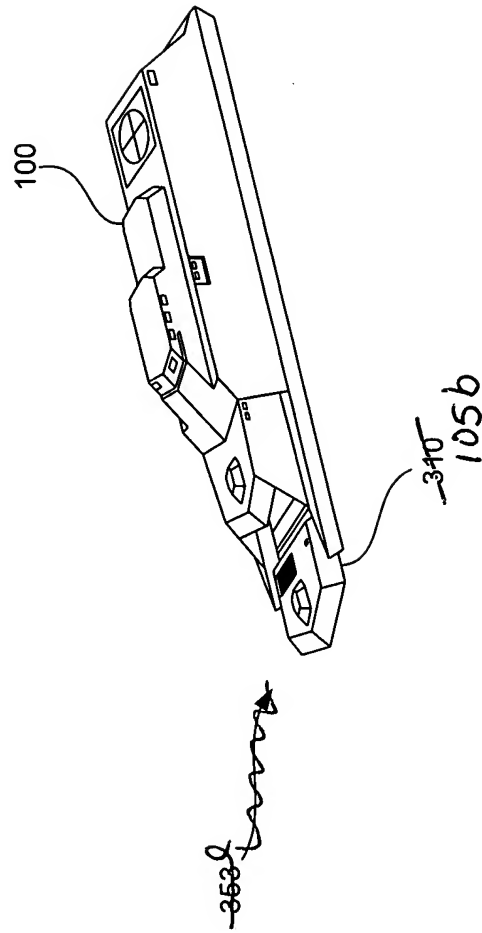
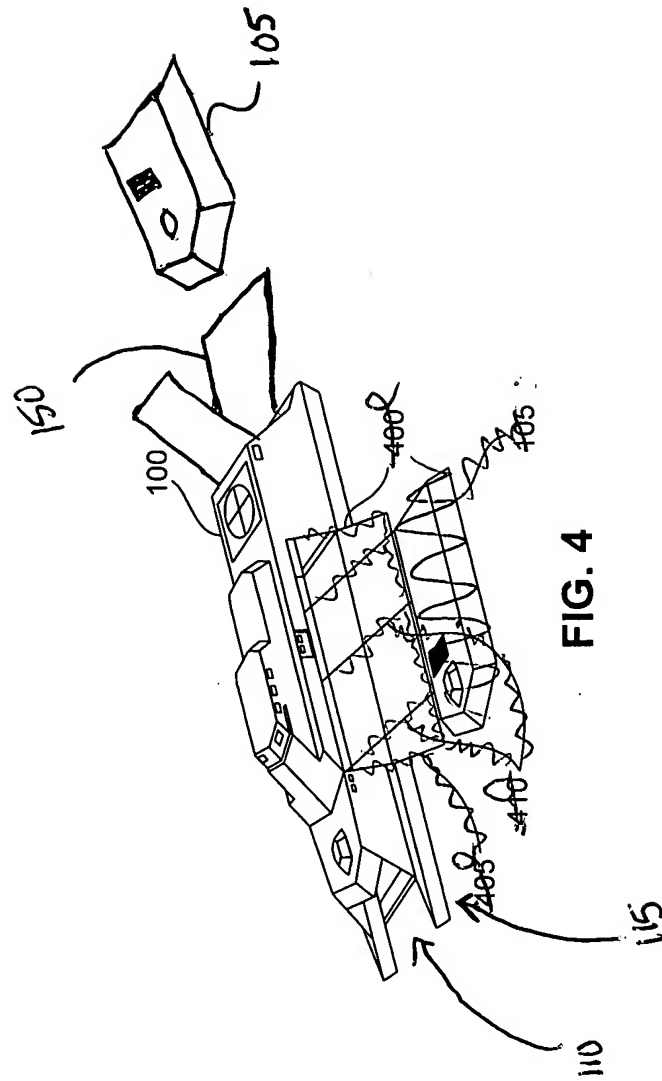


FIG. 3D



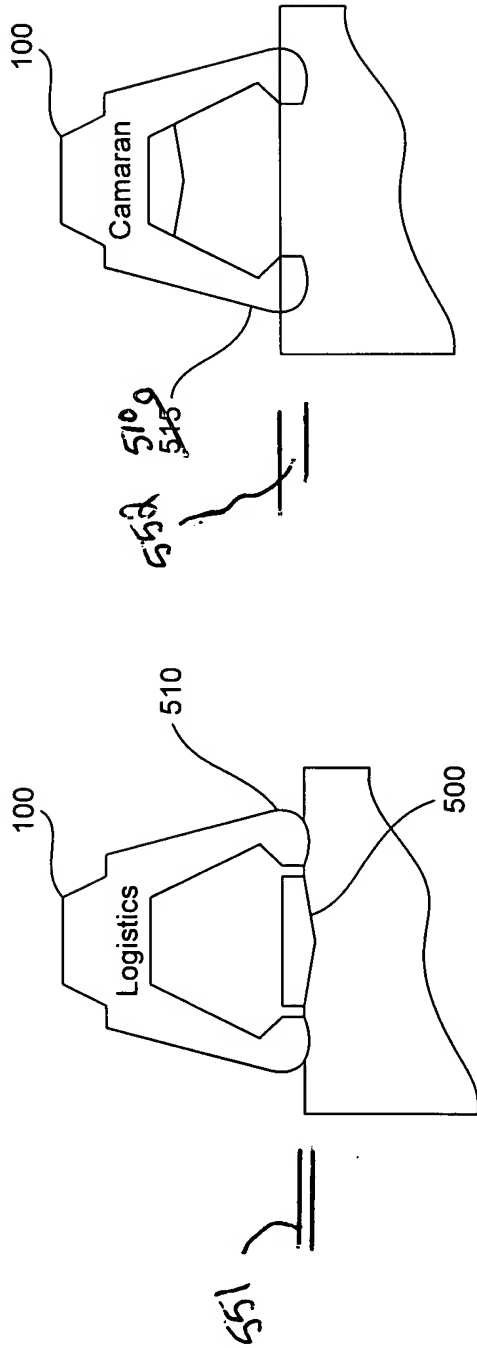


FIG. 5B

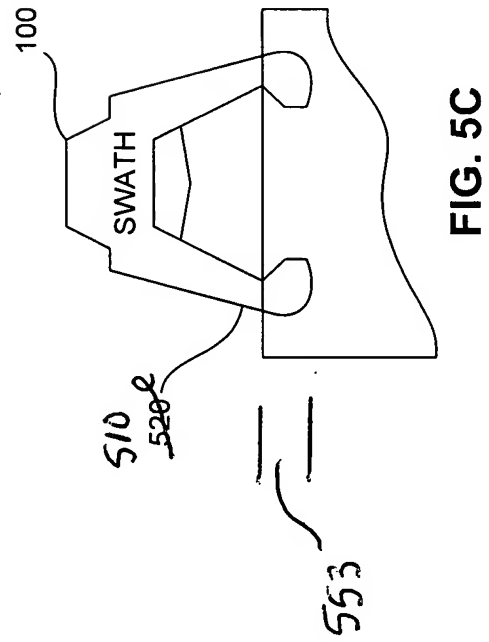
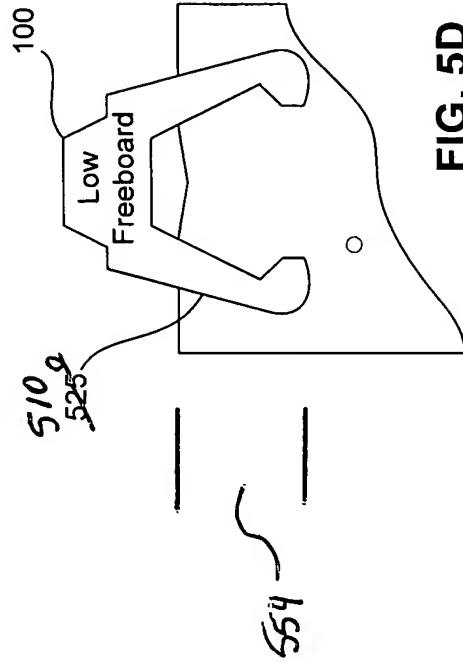


FIG. 5D